

## The eight froggy lessons

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IN the Malaysian culture, pantun, as a form of nursery rhymes, are often used as a handy medium to inculcate positive values among children.

Many such pantun revolve around the frogs, perhaps because it is a creature that can hop between two worlds—land and water. This versatility makes them an interesting subject to convey important lessons.

For example:

Lesson 1: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat sesuka hati. Akibat berniat jahat, akhirnya memakan diri.

Like many other pantun, children can recite this one while acting it out by hopping like a frog. It can be fun as the children try to outdo one another. That is, until someone tries to cheat with claims of having chalked up greater distances.

In the end, the "cheaters" spoil everything, and fun turns into anger, followed by accusations and counter-accusations. This where the moral of the pantun offers a paramount lesson. It emphasises that bad intentions, like bad karma, will eventually lead to destructive consequences.

Unless this is learned, we are bound to repeat it and continue to suffer the consequences.

Lesson 2: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat tinggi-tinggi. Sekiranya tamakkan pangkat, ramai tentu yang membenci.

This one almost follows the previous pantun. Here, the moral is rather clear: theatrics and show-offs are not to be encouraged because these lead to alienation and create false impressions. It is not confined to matters of wealth only, but more so in matters of words, the display of power and privileges.

In other words, one should not wallow in opulent and hedonic behaviour or thinking. This is especially so in these days of scarcity; it can come back to haunt us again and again. Instead, the key value that should be cultivated is a sense of "humility".

Lesson 3: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat jangan binasa. Jika dendam kesumat, hidup pasti celaka.

In some instances, showing off can trigger vengeance and vindictive actions, particularly when it causes ill-feelings. This in turn can lead to jostling for power and positions. In politics, it leads to money politics fuelled by greed and envy. More generally, corruption will become rampant. Finally, everyone suffers.

Lesson 4: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat ke dalam telaga. Amalan suka mengumpat, bak menagih ke neraka.

In worst-case scenarios, the unbridled desire to obtain power and control wealth will invariably lead to more widespread malice and slanderous activities. This is not new any more. Eventually, it will culminate in unleashing a situation likened to that of hell on earth. No one will be spared the misery.

Lesson 5: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat ke singahsana. Jangan derhaka daulat, agar budaya tidak dihina.

When hell breaks loose, it knows no bounds. This can be discerned from the shallowest of ethics and morality, involving even those who claim to be in leadership positions. They have no qualms to forsake the most tested traditional values and cherished principles, as long as the means justifies the end.

Lesson 6: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat biar berhemah. Hidup mesti maufakat, semoga dinaungi Rahmah.

Therefore, what is vital is the drive for a greater consensus towards a larger common interest. For this to happen, it demands utmost sincerity and patience on all sides in working out some of the most difficult solutions needed in dire situations. Only with a high level of maturity and wisdom do we deserve the Amazing Grace.

Lesson 7: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat beria-ia. Amalkan sering bertaubat, agar dapat menghidu syurga.

In the final analysis, it is about coming to our senses and putting back ethics and integrity where they belong—as a matter of uncompromising first principles. There is no room for empty rhetoric to artificially mobilise opinions that eventually lead to nowhere except to benefit a few. Worse, if it is calculated to cause confusion and conflict, as they pursue their goals on the sly.

This would include the shifting of ideas and ideals merely for selfish reasons, even if it means sacrificing one's dignity.

The unveiling of such naked desires is a sure indication that the future will be bleak because it points to the lowest form of struggle that we are forced to depend on.

In short, while it is possible to "leap-frog" in the quest to create transformational changes as a lasting way forward, the caveat perhaps is to learn well the lessons from the above and other similar pantun. And put them into practice at all times.

The final lesson: Lompat si katak lompat, lompat janganlah malas. Berusaha dengan kuat, jangan curi jalan pintas.

That is, it is a matter of keen hard work and not attempts to cut corners. Otherwise, it will be one leapfrog too many!

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